



## **MEETING MINUTES / 16 JUNE 2020**

**\*\*MEETING WAS CONDUCTED VIA ZOOM DUE TO COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS\*\***

### **ATTENDANCE:**

Present: Showell, Stewart, Baldwin, Bradley, Farley, Lardizzone, Lopez, Magner, McMullen, Sarg, Seppala

Excused:

Guests: Courtney Stewart (Deputy Secretary of State), Vince Kane (Wilmington VAMC), Ginny Yelland (Wilmington VAMC), Jacob Dillon (Wilmington VAMC), Tina Foskey (Delaware Veterans Home), Pat Cerchio (First State Women Warriors), Dave Skocik (Veterans Coalition)

### **CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS:**

Acknowledged U.S. Army's birthday

Acknowledged Jason Stewarts hiring as Camden Town Manager

Moment of silence for:

Passing of notable retired Delaware National Guard member

Normally the election month for the chair position

Postponing the vote until July

Stewart will work with nomination committee to secure chair candidates

Submit nominations via his email address

Showell will not seek re-nomination

### **MEETING MINUTES:**

Prior minutes were motioned to approve by Lardizzone, seconded by Sarg

### **ADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS:**

#### **Wilmington VAMC – Vince Kane, Director**

Reviewing safety plan to increase clinical activities

As of 15 June, the network has approved the plan for additional foot traffic in all facilities

The clinic has experienced a decline in communal spread during the last 14 days

The clinic has appropriate protective equipment (staff and veterans) and the ability to test for COVID

The clinic is moving forward with surgeries

Continue to get information out to veterans

Virtual platforms are highly used

Surged beds during pandemic, but they were not needed

Garage construction has begun

- Using shuttle services and prioritized parking space on campus

Dover clinic to open fall 2020 but there are issues with construction supplies

Masks are mandatory at facilities, checking temperatures, restricting visitors meaning family members who are not a part of the visit are asked to remain outside

No positive COVID readings in the facilities, staff or veterans

(McMullen) Will the Dover clinic have radiology?

No, the plan is to use local radiologists

(Sarg) Was the Delaware Veterans Home tested by the Wilmington VAMC staff?

No, they handled their own in-house testing

(Lardizzzone) The DAV van is limited to transporting one veteran, will this change?  
Will have to research safe social distancing and transportation guidelines for safety  
Maintains 30 days of protective equipment, plus an additional 30 days for contingency  
Introduced the new public affairs officer, Jacob Dillon

**Delaware Veterans Home (DVH) – Tina Foskey, Director:**

71 Residents

Have been COVID negative for 96 days, staff is following CDC guidelines

Continuing to order protective equipment

Three employees tested positive and they were not at work

Continuing mandatory testing for employees and vendors, 85 tested so far

Everyone is screened upon entering

Only visitors are emergency vendors

The visiting terminally ill and actively dying residents has been allowed

New admissions are still on suspension

**Home of the Brave, Director Jessica Finan:**

Not present

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Dave Skocik, Veterans Coalition

Continuing to think about virtual event to recognize and fundraise for veterans

Pat Cerchio, First State Women Warriors

Has organizational flags for the Bear veterans cemetery

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Bear Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Magner:**

Interments – 65 (+8)

**Millsboro Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Bradley:**

Interments – 29 (+7)

**Health and Human Services, Commissioner Sarg:**

Sat on brain injury and equal opportunity councils, via Zoom, during restrictions

Legislation, unless COVID related, will not be reviewed

**Legislative Affairs, Commissioner McMullen:**

(McMullen) Will not be able to have committee presentation and a Zoom meeting was requested

(Baldwin) spoke with Representative Ramone concerning HB 265, 100% service-connected property tax exemption, and it will be reviewed for approval

(Sarg) We need to prepare for 2021 legislative recommendation by August 2020

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:**

DVTF Previous Month: Applications 1; Granted 1 (100%); Awarded \$1,668.00; Balance - \$13,000.00

**ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS:**

Commissioner McMullen (Air Force Sergeants Association - AFSA)

No chapter meetings since March

Vice president is attempting to recreate the council

No international conference

Vacant (American Legion - AL)  
Nothing to report

Commissioner Bradley (American Veterans - AMVETS)  
Post 2 has provided free lunches  
Auxiliary is distributing food through the food bank and has worked with the American Legion post 28 to provide lunches  
National convention was cancelled  
Post 2 have been renovated

Commissioner Lardizzone (Disabled American Veterans - DAV)  
National convention was cancelled  
Service officers processed 33 claims  
Department meetings will begin in September

Vacant (Korean War Veterans)  
Nothing to report

Commissioner Farley (Marine Corps League - MCL)  
National convention has been cancelled  
Will attempt a departmental meeting at the end of the month

Commissioner Sarg (Military Officers Association of America - MOAA)  
Chapters have been active  
Dover chapter provided \$7,500.00 in scholarships to county students  
Participated in virtual storming of the hill (Washington, DC)  
- Focused on burn pits and health care

Commissioner Magner (Military Order of the Purple Heart - MOPH)  
National convention has been cancelled  
Held a virtual meeting on 23 May, recommended \$2000.00 for Friends of Fallen (Dover AFB)  
New Castle JROTC scholarship checks have been mailed to recipients  
Used to attend Vet Center group each Friday, has now done it virtually

Commissioner Newman (Veterans of Foreign Wars - VFW)  
Nothing to report

Commissioner Baldwin (Vietnam Veterans of America – VVA)  
Former board member, Delaware Military Academy, Admiral Kenneth Braithwaite was confirmed as Secretary of the Navy  
Military school in Sussex County is on hold  
Delaware Military Academy will hold the high school graduation at the stadium

Commissioner Showell (At Large, affiliated with Delaware National Guard)  
Delaware National Guard community engagements have been limited but they are providing COVID assistance within the community  
National Guard Association of the United States conference will be held virtually on 28 – 29 August

Commissioner Seppala (At Large, affiliated with Military Order of World Wars)

MOWW will not meet until October  
18 JROTC and ROTC awards have been mailed to the recipients  
National convention has been cancelled  
Delaware Military Museum events have been cancelled

Commissioner Lopez (At Large, affiliated with Delaware Veterans)  
Military Womens Tea cancelled until March  
Stand Down has been postponed until June 2021  
DELVETS post reopened  
Mayor Crisis Awareness team is on hold  
Wilmington VA Zoom outreach meeting was informative

Commissioner Stewart (At Large, affiliated with student veterans' associations)  
Nothing to report

**TERM COMPLETION:**

Baldwin – 9 September 2020  
McMullen – 9 September 2020  
Showell – 9 September 2020  
Showell will not seek reappointment and has spoken to the Secretary of State, Deputy Secretary of State, Director, State Commissions on future appointments and the direction of the commissioners  
- Worked to fill vacancies: AMVETS will be reappointed, American Legion has submitted a replacement, Veterans of Foreign Wars has submitted a replacement, Korean War Veterans has submitted a replacement, General Berry will recommend a replacement for Showell  
Baldwin and McMullen will seek reappointment

**EVENTS:**

To be determined

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION:**

**CLOSED SESSION:**

**SPECIAL SESSION:**

**NEXT MEETING:**

**Tuesday, 21 July 2020 at 1000**

**LOCATION:**

**Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs**